(b) if so, what distinct advantage will accure to India thereof by the engagement of the firm when we have a full fledged comprehensive Indian Embassy in USA supported by three Consulates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Government has engaged Venable LLP as a lobbyist firm for:

- securing the active support of the U.S. Government, Congress and public opinion for a strong bilateral relationship by projecting India's priorities, policies and viewpoints on issues of global importance like non-proliferation, human rights etc. and disseminating India's economic and political developments and achievements.

- expanding the areas of convergence between the two countries, and

- monitoring analyzing and advising in various legislative measures in U.S. Congress and Senate for implications on India's interests.

(b) Given the steady progress in relations between India and the US in recent times, the engagement of this firm would be of substantial benefit in taking the relationship to a sustained strategic pertnership level.

Talks between India and Pakistan

1712. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan had rounds of talks to discuss a host of issues including bus services and aviation agreement between two countries ahead of third round of composite dialouge process scheduled in January next year;

(b) whether two countries have planned about 30 meetings in next three months;

(c) if so, whether any agreement in regard to flights by private airlines have also been agreed upon; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) India and Pakistan have successfully completed two rounds of the Composite Dialogue. Two rounds of talks on the Amritsar-Lahore and Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus services have been held in May and September 2005. The thrid round of these talks are due later this month. Talks between Civil Aviation authorities took place in September 2005. Dates for the next round of these talks have not been finalised yet.

(b) India and Pakistan have agreed that the Foreign Secretaries would meet in January 2006 in New Delhi to launch the next round of the Composite Dialogue. Meetings on the other six subjects will be held between January and July 2006. All technical level meetings would be concluded by April 2006.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

Passport applications received through District Passport Cells

†1713. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2561 given in Rajya Sabha on 18th August, 2005 and to state:

(a) the year-wise number of applications received through district passport cells for issuing passport from each district in Chhattisgarh from January, 2002 to 31st December, 2004; and

(b) the details of applicants from Jashpur district, out of above, alongwith the details of person to whom passport were issued actually?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The information is given in the enclosed Statement (*see* below).

(b) During the period of three years from 2002 to 2004, only two applications were received from the Jashpur DPC in 2003. Details of these applicants who were issued passports are given below:

Applicant	Address
Shri Hingan Ram Swarankar	Near Vijay Medical Stores
s/o Shri Jagu Sao Swarankar	P.O. Jashpur Nagar, Jashpur
Smt Sudhawati Devi	- do -
w/o Shri Hingan Ram Swarankar	

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.